

A Three-Step Process to Develop Iraqi Security Forces

The Coalition and the Iraqi government have a three-step process to develop Iraqi Security Forces (ISF):

- **Step 1 — Training and equipping Iraqi forces.** This phase is constantly in motion, with more than a quarter-million Iraqi Security Forces now trained and equipped.
- **Step 2 — Iraqi forces lead, with Coalition support.** This process is almost 75 percent completed. ISF are progressing enough they'll be taking on security missions with very little Coalition support over the next 12 to 18 months.
- **Step 3 — Iraqi Security Forces independently provide security and help maintain stability in Iraq.**

According to Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., step three will require strong institutional and ministerial capacity, plus building the key enabling systems such as logistics, intelligence and medical support.

The primary threats to Iraq's security are terrorists and death squads, both of which must be addressed for an independent and stable Iraq. As the Iraqis begin to feel more confident in their forces, militias will have less of a presence in Iraqi communities.

Links: [transcript](#) of Gen. Casey's Aug. 30 interview; AFPS [story](#).



An Iraqi soldier provides U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Derrick Popham intelligence information during Operation Sidewinder in August in Sadiquiyah, Iraq. (Photo by U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Ray Lewis)

Historic Transfer of Military Authority

Iraqis on Thursday took operational control of their ground forces command structure as well as their air force and navy.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki took control of the air force, navy and the 8th Iraqi Army Division. It is Maliki's decision how quickly to take over more divisions.

According to U.S. Army Maj. Gen William Caldwell, spokesman for Multi-National Force-Iraq, Maliki will most likely assume control of about two divisions each month.

Currently, six of 10 Iraqi army divisions are in the lead in their areas of operations. Underneath the divisions are 26 brigades and 88 battalions in the lead.

Gen. Caldwell characterized the Sept. 7 ceremony for the transfer of control as a significant event: "It's the one event that puts the prime minister directly in the operational control of his military forces as his role as the commander in chief."

Over the past three years, Iraq's armed forces

have been built from the ground up as a modern and effective fighting force.

Iraqi army divisions have fought alongside Coalition forces under the commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

Coalition forces continue to train Iraqi forces, which now stand at about 130,000 trained and equipped soldiers. The goal is to have around 137,000 troops in the Iraqi military.

Links: Caldwell [transcript](#); AFPS [story](#).



A 6th Iraqi Army Division instructor shows Staff Sgt. Reginald Scott, left, and Sgt. Jadrien Wilson, right, how to handle a malfunction of an RPK light machine gun.

Iraqi Soldiers Train U.S. Troops on Weapons Used by Insurgents

Coalition troops reversed roles with their Iraqi army counterparts recently as Iraqi army instructors taught the basics of Iraqi weaponry to U.S. soldiers.

Engineers from the 6th Iraqi Army Division and explosive ordnance instructors taught soldiers at Camp Liberty about the Iraqi army's Russian-made AK-47 light and medium machine guns.

U.S. soldiers praised the training, part of a partnership between Iraqi and U.S. engineer units designed to pave the way for future joint missions. In addition, the soldiers said the

training will help them react better "outside the wire" as the insurgents also have the weapons.

Staff Sgt. Reginald Scott with the 62nd Engineer Battalion said, "Being able to understand how the weapons function will help us develop better techniques, tactics and procedures to protect ourselves. For example, if we take fire while out on a mission, knowing the range and capability of the rounds coming at us will help us determine whether to return fire or not."

Link: MNF-Iraq [story](#).